



**Aging Committee
Public Hearing
Tuesday, March 9, 2021
Written Testimony of the
Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils**

Senator Slap, Representative Phipps and esteemed members of the Aging Committee. Thank you for taking the time to review this written testimony on behalf of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils [SCPRC]. With support from the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the SCPRC serves as an independent group made up of Resident Council Presidents from nursing homes across the state as well as former Resident Council Presidents who have transitioned to living independently in the community. We work together to empower Connecticut's 20,000 nursing home residents to self-advocate on issues that directly impact their care and quality of life. The SCPRC is testifying on the following bill:

S.B. 973 (RAISED) AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF RESIDENTS AND FAMILY COUNCILS.

We want to thank the Aging Committee for raising this bill. The SCPRC fully supports this bill. Nursing home residents' rights are guaranteed under Federal law as part of the 1987 Nursing Home Reform Act (42 CFR § 483.10) and under CT State Law (CGS 19a550). Resident rights affirm that an individual is fully informed of their rights as a resident. Likewise, it is required that an individual be fully informed of the services available to them when residing in a nursing home.

As legislators, you are acutely aware that so many of the changes that affect nursing homes and the people who live there hinge on legislative and policy actions.

S.B. 973 allows for residents to be informed of changes that would directly impact care, services, and life in the nursing home. Additionally, it will allow residents, residents councils, and family councils to provide input and be active members on committees and stake-holder groups that influence nursing home laws, policies, and practices. While there are current laws that ensure residents are informed of certain occurrences, for example during a nursing home closure, there is no legislation promoting that residents are informed before discussions or changes take place. Similarly, there is no such law requiring residents to provide feedback or opinion in a way that is accessible and person-centered. This bill will guarantee residents and family members the opportunity to be at the table, wherever that table is located for them, when potential changes are being proposed. We firmly support a bill that allows for residents

and family members to become active participants in creating change and not just the bearers of it.

As a group, the mission of the SCPRC states, “we are committed to be the VOICES and represent all of our fellow peers who receive their long-term services and supports in a nursing home. We will advocate at the State and Federal levels for quality of care for individuals living in Connecticut skilled nursing homes and for individuals who have transitioned to the community. We strive to be credible and informed advocates as we work with the Office of the State Ombudsman and develop and support legislation and public policy initiatives for the individuals we represent.”

Overall, S.B. 973 would significantly reinforce and support our Mission as a formal group of nursing home advocates. Passage of S.B. 973 allows us as the SCRPC to be the best advocates we can be. Advocates for our fellow nursing home residents, but also for families and friends of people in nursing homes, staff members who work in nursing homes, and for the general public who, at the minimum, should have an awareness of the key issues that affect nursing homes and the care individuals receive there.

Below is a link to a video that we, the SCPRC, have created further cementing our views on why passage of S.B. 973 is so vitally important.

<https://youtu.be/oEjDZGQICl>

Thank you for taking the time to review our testimony.

The Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils:

Jeanette Sullivan-Martinez (President) – Pendleton Health and Rehab; Mystic
Patty Bausch – Newtown Rehabilitation and Health Care Center; Newtown
Brad Parkhurst – Living independently in New London
David Peck – Living independently in Hamden
Susan Bilansky – Hebrew Home; West Hartford
Martha Leland – Touchpoints at Manchester; Manchester
John Balisciano – Hewitt Health and Rehab; Shelton
Gregory Brooks – Quinnipiac Valley Center; Wallingford